

LEYENDAS

2016 Tradiciones • The Taos News

*As I have gone alone in there
And with my treasures bold,
I can keep my secret where,*

*And hint of riches new and old
Begin it where warm waters halt
And take it in the canyon down,
Not far, but too far to walk.*

*Put in below the home of Brown.
From there it's no place for the meek,
The end is ever drawing nigh,
There'll be no paddle up your creek,*

*Just heavy loads and water high.
If you've been wise and found the blaze,
Look quickly down, your quest to cease,
But tarry scant with marvel gaze,*

*Just take the chest and go in peace.
So why is it that I must go
And leave my love for all to seek?
The answers I already know,*

*I've done it tired, and now I'm weak.
So hear me all and listen good,
Your effort will be worth the cold.
If you are brave and in the wood
I give you title to the gold.*





Native Americans of the Southwest built variations of a sweat lodge.

LARGER THAN LIFE

The stuff that legends are made of

In your hands is the 16th annual installment of *Tradiciones*. From past to present, this special publication continues to be a recognition and ovation of the minds and hearts that mold and bless this special home in the high-desert mountains; and provides a look into some of Taos County’s fabled spots, customs, and environmental and historical movements.

This issue of “Leyendas” (Legends) — the first in the four-part series — takes you to the Lawrence Ranch, up Gold Hill, on a treasure hunt, into a sweat lodge and introduces a lesser-known

‘... Everything we consider today to be myth and legend, our ancestors believed to be history and everything in our history includes myths and legends.’
— C. JoyBell C., author

addition Ernie Blake envisioned for Taos Ski Valley. The conspiracy-driven Taos Hum is re-explored, as is the long-time presence of the non-native Siberian elms.

Whether mythical or tangible, proven true or still unverified, Taos legends never fade away. Keeping our stories alive is to know of our colorful people, captivating cultural traditions and stunning natural environment for today and for generations to come.

— Scott Gerdes, *special sections editor*

LEYENDAS



“Eloisa and Saint Theresa,” photograph of Eloisa Montoya (101 years old when picture was taken) of Tecolote, New Mexico, by Bob MacDougall.

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Scott Gerdes
Towering Siberian elm in Talpa.

THE SIBERIAN ELM

The persistent legacy of good intentions

BY M. ELWELL ROMANCITO

They are everywhere. They choke waterways and get tangled up in barbed wire along side roads. Bristling logs and cuts spring to life with a crown of new shoots.

The Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) is a pest and it often seems like there's no getting rid of them once you have them. This species of tree is sometimes mistakenly referred to as Chinese Elm, but that is a different tree with its own peculiar characteristics. In fact, when

researching the subject, it is often a good idea to refer to the Latin name just to make sure you're really looking at the right tree because of the many confusions in the literature.

How did this tree that is native to Asia become such a dominant part of the Taos landscape? It's almost a perfect storm of good deeds turning into a nightmare for farmers, gardeners, landowners and landscapers.

To really identify the culprit of why we have

so many Siberian elms in Taos you have to cast your eyes to Kansas. The tree was first planted at the Fort Hays Branch Experiment Station and the shelterbelt they built as a demonstration of windbreaks under western Kansas conditions. The windbreak was 500 or so yards wide and was planted in 1907.

The first Siberian elm, planted in 1913, was proving to be a rapid-growing hardy tree, which adapted well from its native China to western Kansas. Enthusiastic nursery growers

and county extension agents took note. That first mother tree propagated thousands of trees that were planted throughout the state in those first years.

Eventually, the state of Kansas closed its forestry nursery in 1952, after distributing more than 5 million Siberian elms in the last 10 years of operation.

This fast-growing tree was really capturing the imagination of farmers and ranchers

This fast-growing tree was really capturing the imagination of farmers and ranchers looking for windbreaks.

looking for windbreaks. Former New Mexico Governor Clyde Tingley was one of the tree's early converts. He distributed the seedlings across the state in the 1930s. Like the agents in Kansas, he thought propagation of the tree was a great idea. At first, no one realized the error that was being made.

Now, the legacy of these nuisance trees is visible almost everywhere in the region. In many areas, native trees are overwhelmed and pushed out. Eradication is difficult and costly, so these elms stick around for years and years, getting bigger and bigger with deeper and deeper roots. What's more, they are hybridizing with native trees and creating more problems than they ever solved.

Siberian elm is distinguished by small toothed leaves about 1-2½ inches long and half as wide and pointed at the tip.

Leaves are smooth and dark green above, while paler and nearly hairless beneath. Mature trees reach a height of 50-70 ft., with a round crown of slender, spreading branches. The bark is rough, gray or brown with shallow furrows, when mature.

Flowering occurs in the springtime. The small greenish flowers lack petals and occur in drooping clusters. A single seed forms in the center of each smooth, flattened, circular, half-inch wide fruit.

Prairies and stream banks are vulnerable to Siberian elm invasion. Thickets of seedlings soon form around seed-producing trees, bare ground areas, animal and insect mounds, and other disturbed areas.

Wind carries the little discs to distant areas and new colonies can form. The seedlings take advantage of open ground and resources otherwise used by native plants. Fast-growing seedlings of Siberian elm quickly overtake



M. Elwell Romancito

native vegetation, especially trees that require a lot of sun. This often leads to invasion by additional nuisance species, which compounds the problem.

Siberian elm trees are very drought and cold resistant allowing them to grow in areas where other trees have trouble. Trees form dense thickets that close open areas and displace native vegetation, thereby reducing forage for wild animals and livestock.

If you have a Siberian elm on your property, it is wise to remove it promptly.

One way to kill a mature tree is by girdling. According to Jill Kennay and George Fell of the Natural Land Institute, "Girdling trees is the preferred management technique where practical."

Girdling involves stripping the bark in a band roughly three to four inches wide, all the way around the tree. This process takes longer than cutting down the tree and using herbicides (one to two years to die completely) but it ensures that the tree will never sprout again.

Girdling is best when done in late spring.

Sap is flowing during this time and the bark will peel away more easily. Make two shallow, parallel cuts made to form a band that can be peeled away. You can do this with a hand saw or chainsaw. Be very careful not to cut too deep. Only the bark should be peeled away. If you cut too deep the tree will behave as if you cut it down and it will sprout again the following year.

Siberian elms will propagate by cuttings, so experts recommend you gather all remnants of the cut tree for destruction by chipping or burning.

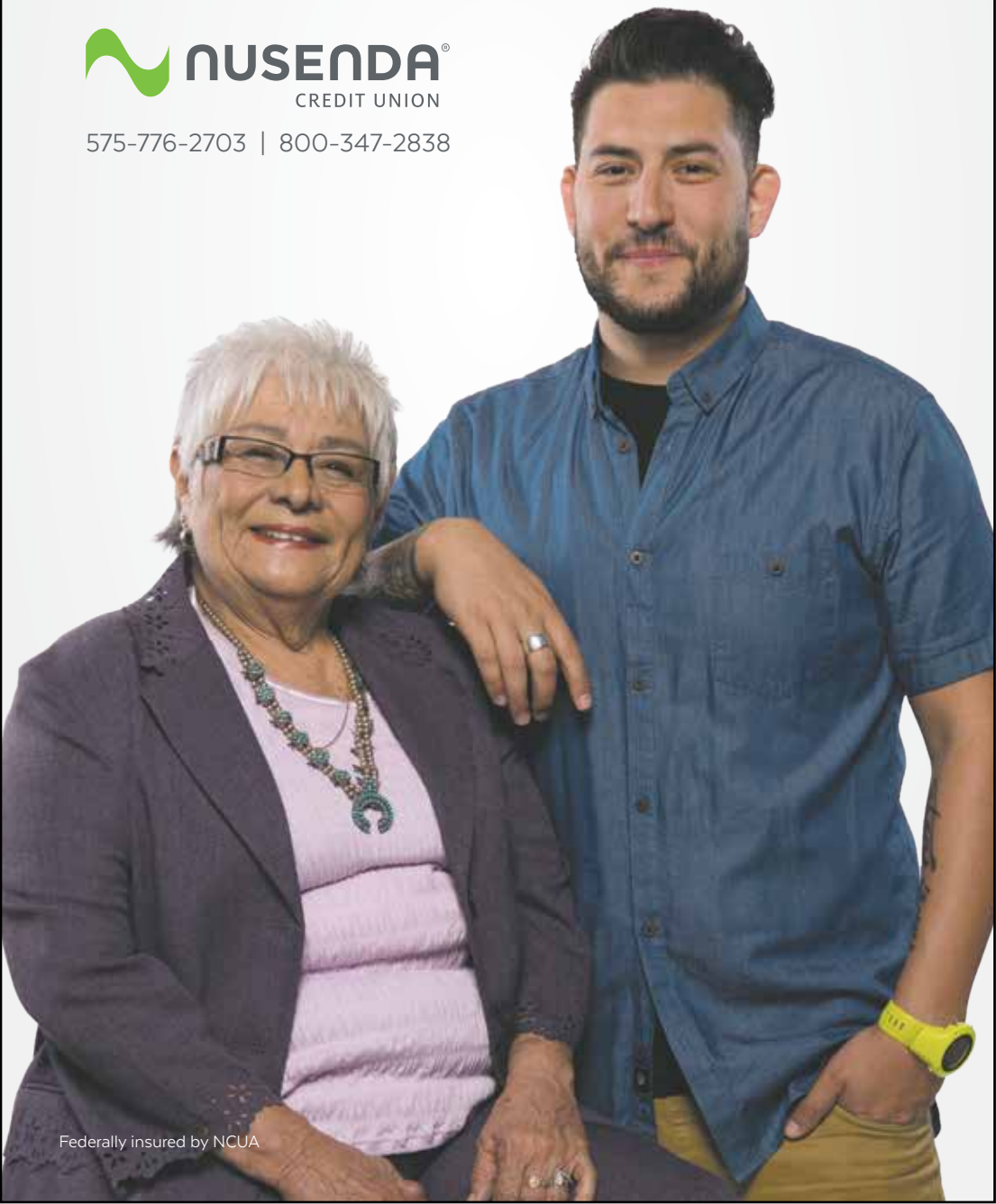
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- Tomas Sanchez & Lorenza Garcia

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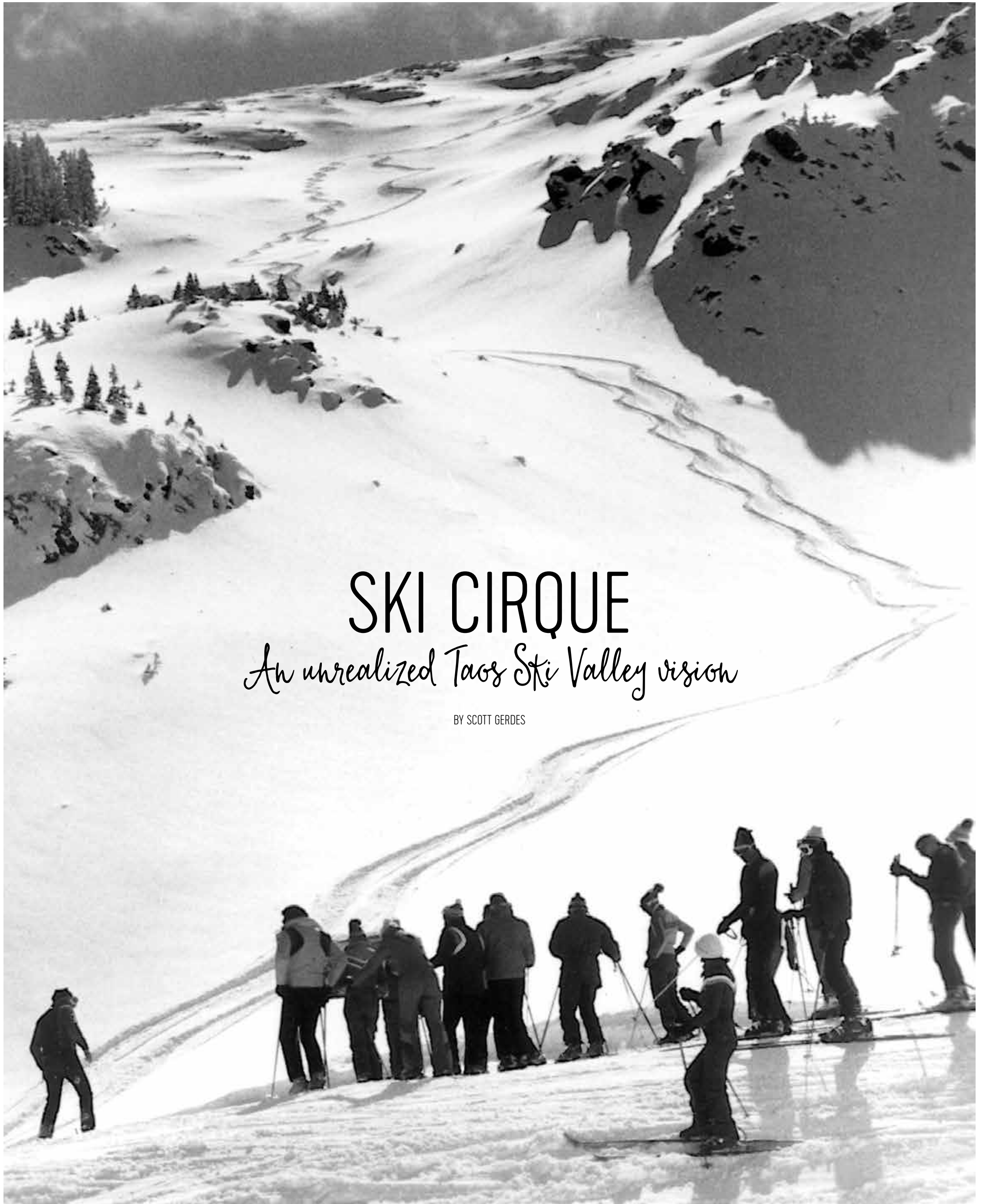
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SKI CIRQUE

An unrealized Taos Ski Valley vision

BY SCOTT GERDES

Taos News Archive/Ernie Blake
A quick glance at the tracks coming down from Kachina Peak before skiing off into the Kachina Basin powder.

A grand new Blake Hotel at Taos Ski Valley is just one sign reminding us that change can happen. But sometimes a vision — no matter how exciting — never gets far beyond the planning stage.

By the start of 1971, ski pioneer Ernie Blake had transformed Taos Ski Valley (TSV) from a one-lodge, one-run ski resort into a three-chairlift, preferred destination for beauty- and thrill-seekers.

Many of those skiers traveled from the Midwest. “Blake had numerous connections in Chicago. They were known to jump on a train and head to TSV for week-long ski excursions,” said TSV Communications Manager Dave Smith. Those excursions, Smith surmised, gave Blake an idea.

Kachina Village (originally named “Taos Meadows”) was unveiled as a three-phase, 120-acre, \$9.7 million Ski Cirque (Circus) development anchored by 2,100 more lodging beds, just behind where The Bavarian Restaurant sits today. Kachina Village, the plan went, was to be where Chair 4 is now. The new 4,370-foot long, 1,200 vertical rise double chair lift started carrying avid intermediate skiers to the snow-rich Kachina Basin for the first time by Christmas 1971. It would be the only part of Kachina Village to

come to fruition.

Smith came across the non-materialized plans while looking through old documents, newspaper clippings and photographs in “a bunch of archived articles that are stored in my office.”

Kachina Village was anticipated to take a decade to complete, with the purpose of strengthening TSV’s “position among America’s internationally known ski resorts,” according to an unidentifiable Independent Newspapers story published Dec. 10, 1971.

Blake and the owners of the land — the directors of the Orville E. Pattison Family Trust — divulged Kachina Village was to be located 1.6 miles south of the present Taos Ski Valley. The idea was the new ski runs would “interlock” with existing runs so visitors could ski from one village to another. An excerpt from the Corry McDonald book, “Wilderness A New Mexico Legacy,” also brings to light a past plan for a road stretching from Bull-of-the-Woods Pasture to Red River. And even talk of a grand circus route so skiers could swoosh from Red River to TSV in one giant loop.

“That is the purpose of a European Ski Cirque — a circus in which you can ski from village to village, enjoying the best of several worlds,” Blake is quoted as saying in the Dec. 1971

article.

Those “worlds” were planned to be different, in keeping true to Blake’s heavily inspired European influence. The Ski Cirque was to feature the gentle bowls, glades and meadows around Kachina Peak. The area was meant to appeal to the “pleasure skier” and “those seeking exceptionally long runs,” the article stated.

An agreement with Blake stipulated that successful wheat farmer and family patriarch O.E. Pattison of Clovis, and his three sons, would keep ownership of the land and build the shops, lodges, restaurants and condominiums.

“The present Taos Ski Valley corporation will operate the ski shop and lifts, and will maintain the ski slopes,” Blake told the newspaper.

O.E. Pattison, Blake added, was responsible for discovering the old copper mining community of Twining (now the village of Taos Ski Valley), which he purchased in 1946.

The timetable for Kachina Village laid out plans for the “first lift, lounge and day-skiers restaurant” to be constructed by the fall of 1972. Phase 1 projected 300 more beds added in 1973. Phase 2 called for 600 beds in 1976 and an additional 1,200 beds in 1982 during

Phase 3. At the time, TSV’s bed capacity was 600.

By 1973, planners wanted to erect a beginner’s lift (1,000 feet long, 125-foot vertical rise) on the Pattison’s private land. Three years after that, Blake envisioned adding another 1,000-foot long chairlift with a vertical rise of 250 feet for use by the Taos summer slalom training school.

The projected costs for the 10-year expansion was listed as condominiums and lodges (new beds) \$7.2 million; \$1.1 million for new lifts; \$720,000 for shops, restaurants and entertainment facilities; \$225,000 for slope preparation and grooming; \$190,000 for community sewer and water; \$175,000 for community roads and parking; and \$90,000 earmarked for miscellaneous engineering and planning.

When Blake talked about the ultimate plan for Kachina Village in the decades-old interview, he emphasized that it wasn’t born from just an economic and job-creating perspective: It “encompasses a new concept in which skiing utilizes existing glades and meadows to preserve the natural environment.”

Blake further believed that another advantage of the new slope system was its location. Being in a “horseshoe-shaped, snow-rich bowl protected from wind” allowed for “careful

slope grooming” resulting in a longer ski season.

The Forest Service was also initially on board with Kachina Village.

“We are pleased with the comprehensive plan for expansion of the winter sports area, and are confident that Taos Ski Valley management will comply with its continuing promise to preserve the landscape and protect the environment,” stated then-Carson Forest Supervisor William Snyder.

Even with everyone involved on board, no ground was ever broken for the structures that were to be Kachina Village even though an Oct. 25, 1972, Taos News article reported that by 1973, “the first lodges, restaurants, bistros and other facilities will be ready at Taos Meadows.” In late March 1973, a proposal by Buell Pattison, of the Pattison Trust, to construct a three-quarter mile road through Carson National Forest to the new development was set for a public hearing. The new road would’ve allowed motorists to bypass the series of roads at the resort on their way to the new village. “Construction of lodges and hotels at the village site is scheduled to begin this summer,” the article also states. Many letters to the editor followed in subsequent issues, raising the need for a more thorough environmental impact study by the Forest Service. “Why the rush,” was a common view among citizens, especially those living in Hondo Canyon.

Blake went on the offensive — according to a Taos News article from April 18, 1973 — telling a group at the Lions Club, “I do not think that anyone with common sense would wish this project to be held up or obstructed.”

Led by environmental lobbyist Harvey Mudd, a series of talks ensued to try and hammer out a settlement between the two camps. Mudd’s main contentions of controversy, as reported in May 1973, were the “ultimate population density” of the Ski Valley (including vehicle numbers, open space maintenance and support facilities), Arroyo Hondo watershed protection, and potential harm to wilderness areas and Native land. A petition signed by more than 200 people requested the Forest Service prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS), which would delay the building of the road for a year. The Taos Pueblo council also voiced concerns. Negotiations hit a dead end in June 1973, with trustee Hoyt Pattison claiming the sticking point was a proposed limit on the elevation of any development on his family’s land. An EIS was ordered.

In Sept. 1974, upon completion of the EIS, the Forest Service said no to the road with Snyder stating “until or unless the Forest Service is shown adequate professional data that the effluent regulations for ‘high quality’ mountain streams can be met by the proposed development.”

By 1977, sewage plant issues and taxpayer subsidy of private business interests became a point of contention to Arroyo Hondo residents, in particular, who continued to oppose TSV expansion.

A late 1970’s photograph of Blake from *The Taos News* archives reveals in the cutline, “The ski area is now 23 years old and Ernie says: “We don’t want to grow any bigger.”

It seems Blake accepted his dream’s fate and the expansion plan was simply filed away.



Courtesy Taos Ski Valley



EL MONTE

s a g r a d o

TAOS

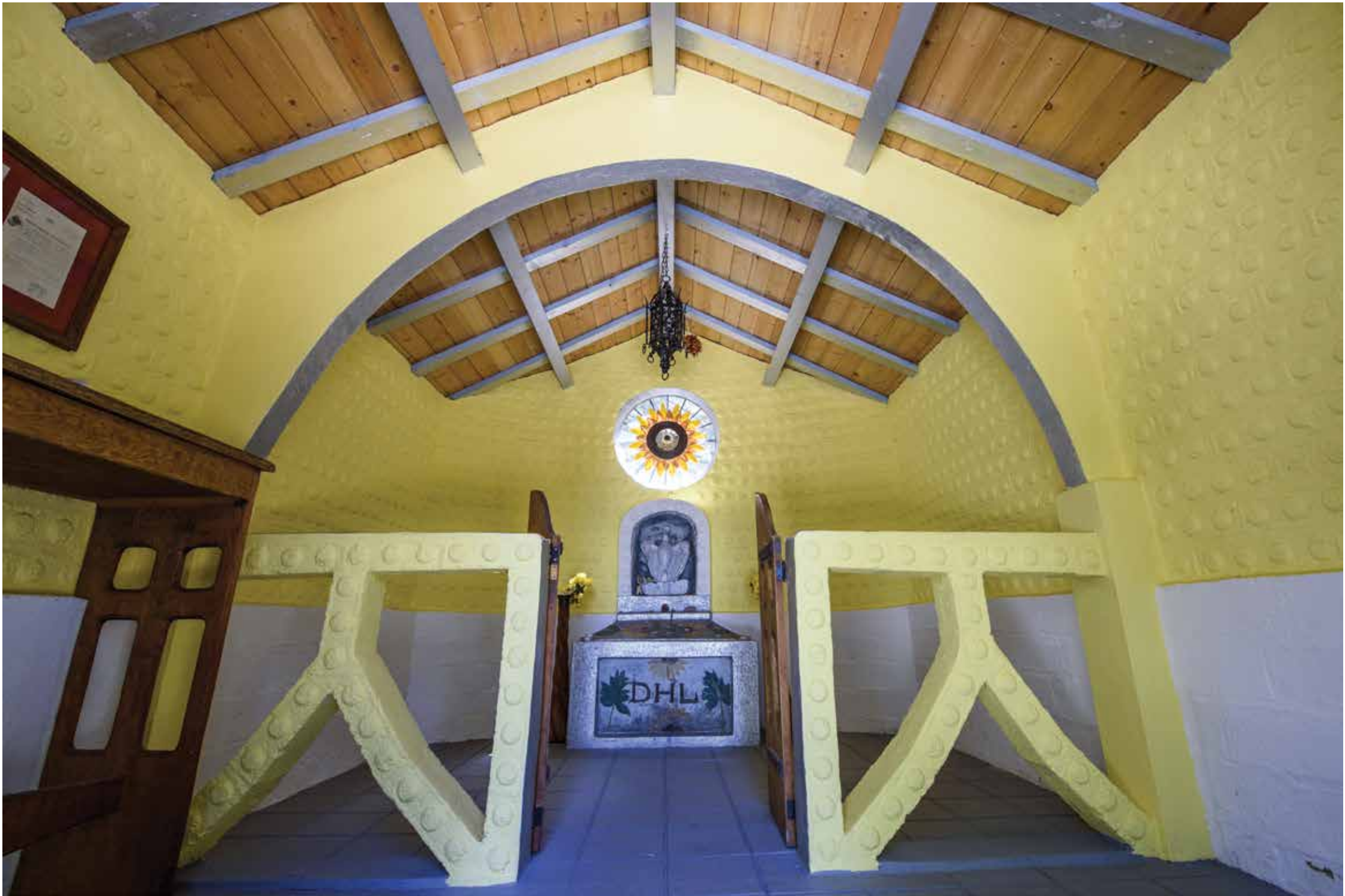


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From top clockwise: The D.H. Lawrence Memorial sits on ranch property; The Homesteaders Cabin at the D.H. Lawrence Ranch; Members of the Taos Historical Society take a tour of the D.H. Lawrence Ranch on July 9.

THE D.H. LAWRENCE RANCH

Profound solace

BY ANDY DENNISON

When iconoclastic British author D.H. Lawrence and his wife Frieda arrived in Taos in 1922, they took up residency on the 12-acre compound owned by impresario Mabel Dodge Sterne near the center of town.

They were part of a significant artists' migration to Taos in the early 20th century that was due, on one hand, to a fascination with the Natives who had lived beneath the Taos mountains for centuries — and on the other to the desire of Mabel Dodge Sterne to surround herself with artists and writers. In fact, she had selfish reasons to invite the Lawrences to live in Taos: She wanted to collaborate with him to write the quintessential novel on the American Indian.

This project began in Mabel's bedroom, moved to the Lawrence house but didn't get far, thanks to Frieda's resistance, who made sure that Mabel did not recapture "the complete, stark approximation of spiritual union, a seeing of each other in a luminous vision of reality."

So it didn't take long for the writer and his wife to realize that living within proximity of the mercurial Mabel Dodge (soon to be Luhan) was impossible. Lawrence wrote to his mother-in-law that she "likes to play the patroness ... wants to be 'good' and is very wicked ... a big, white crow, a cooing raven of

ill-omen, a little buffalo." So they moved up to a ranch that Mable Dodge owned above San Cristóbal. They settled in the ranch's small cluster of buildings tucked in the pines at 8,500 feet, surrounded by meadows and overlooking the vast Taos Valley — "great and flat like a shadowy lake, very wide." They brought two Danish painters, Knud Merrild and Kai Gotsche, with them. But Sterne didn't like the Danes staying at her ranch, so they had to live at the neighboring Hawk Ranch.

Mabel wanted to give the ranch to Lawrence, but he didn't want to be beholden to her and, instead, paid for it with a manuscript of the autobiographical novel Sons and Lovers.

Despite his frail condition (Lawrence had been diagnosed with tuberculosis and died of it in 1930 at age 44), the son of a coal miner found great joy in the quietude and naturalism of the countryside.

Taken by the domesticity of the ranch, Lawrence baked bread and cooked chickens in the outdoor horno. He helped hew logs to restore and expand the main homesteader cabin and for a new cabin that eventually housed artist Dorothy Brett. He built furniture, rode horses around the forests and meadows, hunted — and lay beneath the towering Ponderosa pines.

"Strange, those pine trees!" he wrote in the

essay "St Mawr." "In some lights all their needles glistened like polished steel, and subtly glittering with a whitish glitter among darkness, like real needles. Then again, at evening, the trunks would flare up orange red, and the tufts would be dark, alert tufts like a wolf's tail touching the air."

Several men from Taos Pueblo helped at the ranch, including Trinidad Archuleta, who taught Lawrence to ride. A number of Pueblo people spent time on the ranch, which had been renamed Lobo Ranch by the Lawrences. The ancient Kiowa Trail ran up the hill from the ranch, a route that Taos Puebloans took annually to collect minerals around today's village of Questa.

The Lawrences lived among the native animals, domesticated and wild. Frieda became attached to her horse, Azul, while Lawrence developed an affection for a dairy cow that he named Black-eyed Susan: "She likes to linger, while one talks to her. She knows quite well she makes me mad when she swings her tail in my face. So sometimes she swings it, just on purpose: and looks at me out of the black corner of her great, pure-black eye, when I yell at her," he wrote in "... Love Was Once A Little Boy."

The Lawrences left Lobo Ranch in 1925, sailing to Europe. Several times in the final years of his life, he made plans to return to New Mexico. But his failing health — and

troubles getting a visa — prohibited him from returning. He died March 2, 1930.

Frieda did come back, with her Italian lover and soon-to-be husband, Angelo Ravali. The couple built a small shrine at the top of a slope above the original homestead, where Lawrence's ashes were entombed.

Frieda took up with Mabel and Dorothy Brett, known as "The Three Fates," and lived the la vie de salon until she died in 1957. Her ashes, too, were buried at the ranch shrine.

Today, visitors are welcome at the ranch. Docents run tours of the ranch Thursdays through Saturdays, and groups may reserve time for special events.

Not only will they learn about the history of the ranch and the Lawrences' time there, they also can come to a better understanding of how life at the ranch provided profound solace away from the industrialism and capitalism that the British author so despised: "I think New Mexico was the greatest experience from the outside world that I have ever had. It certainly changed me for ever. Curious as it may sound, it was New Mexico that liberated me from the present era of civilization, the great era of material and mechanical development."


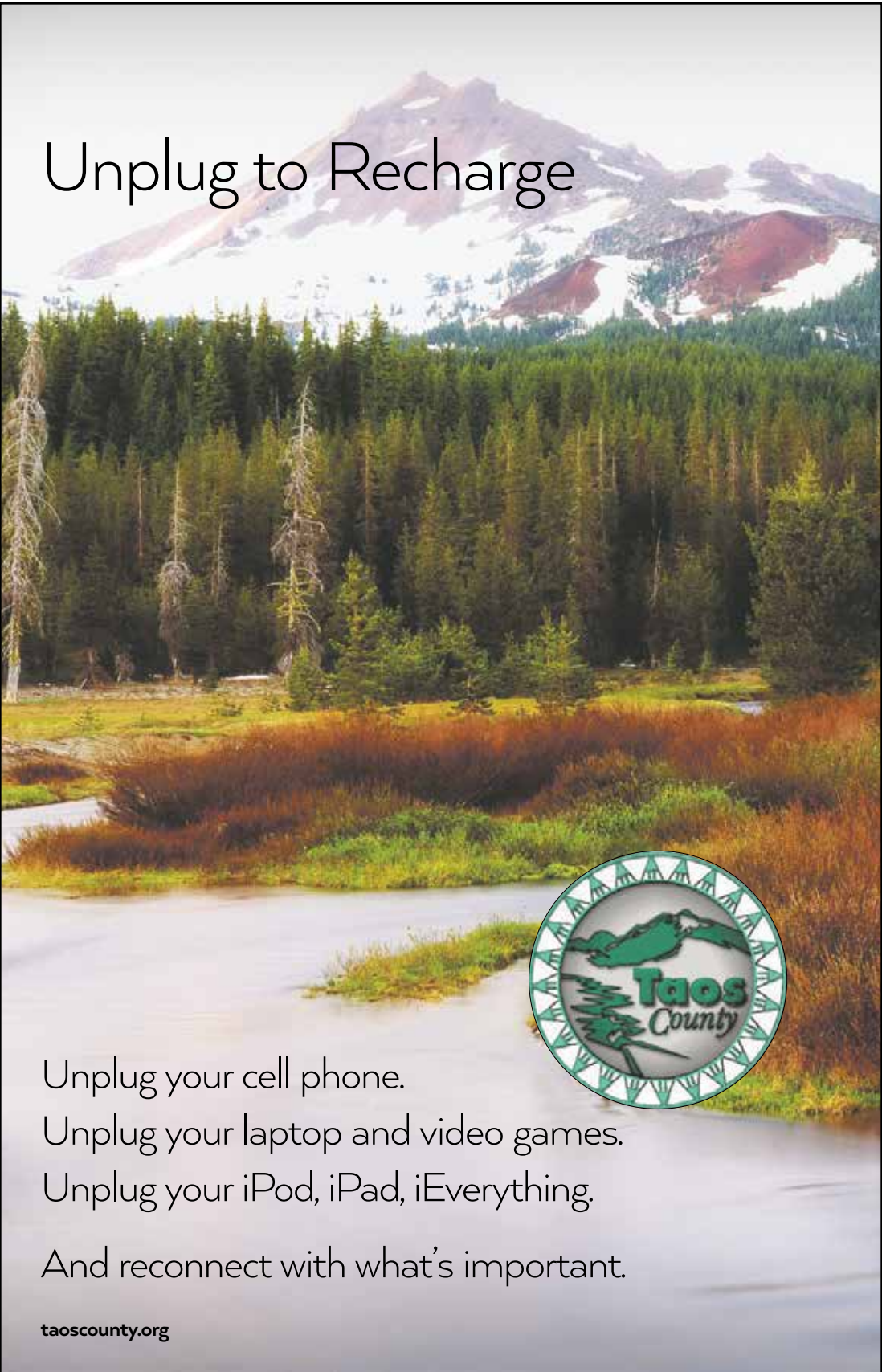
Source: "D.H. Lawrence and New Mexico," Keith Sagar, ed.



Top: The D.H. Lawrence Ranch in San Cristobal. Inset: The Taos Historical Society tours the D.H. Lawrence Ranch on July 9.

‘... the son of a coal miner found great joy in the quietude and naturalism of the countryside.’


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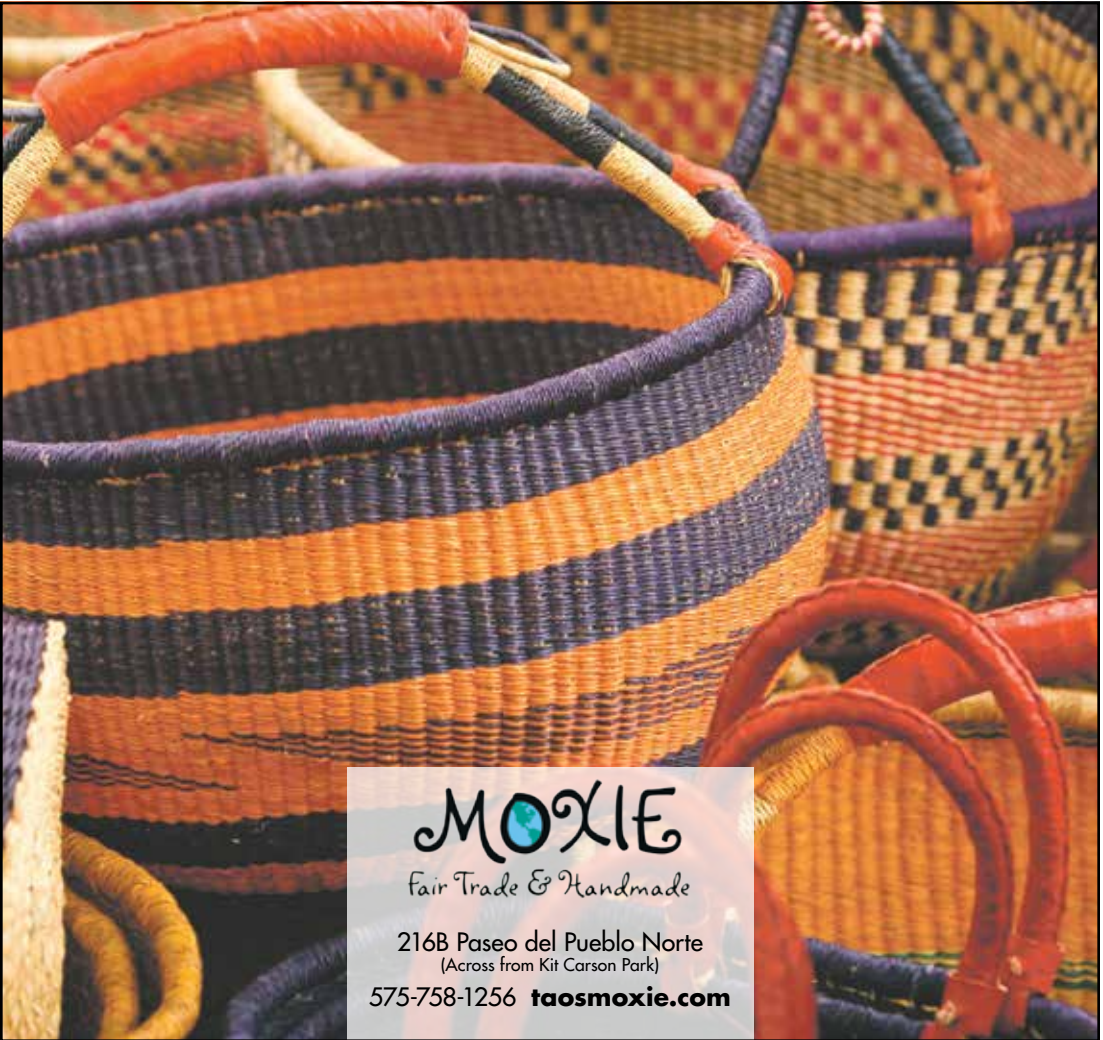


Century 21 of Taos would like to give thanks to all the people throughout our communities history that helped shape the legends that make Taos unique.

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Shutterstock/Edward S. Curtis
A Nez Perce sweat lodge ca. 1910.

SWEAT LODGES

'Return to the Sacred'

BY JIM O'DONNELL

Sweat lodges appear in one form or another in nearly every culture throughout the world and throughout time. In North America, sweat lodges date back millennia. Herodotus wrote of Scythian sweats. The Bronze Age Irish constructed semi-permanent structures resembling a cross between Native American sweat lodges and beehives. Reports of paganish Irish sweat lodge practices appeared into the 18th Century. In India among Hindus there is the fire lodge ceremony. Very similar practices are known from Japan to Australia to Africa and of course to the Finns, the main source for most of the secular saunas we experience today in our hotels, gyms and even in our homes. But the Finnish sauna, like those of the other cultures mentioned here, wasn't originally secular. Instead it was a place of intense spirituality and physical healing. I wrote about Finnish saunas extensively in my 2009 book "Notes for the Aurora Society: 1500 Miles on Foot Across Finland". In my three years living in Finland I often heard the phrase *jokaisen on kayttaydyttava saunaan samalla tavalla kuin kirkossa* meaning that 'one must conduct himself in the sauna the same as when in the church.' The sauna was both a place of healing and the center of an alteration of experience at times intended to put the participant in touch with the world of spirits.

Throughout North and South America native peoples practice varying forms of sweat lodge ceremonies intended to purify the body, the mind, the emotions as well as to connect with the spiritual world. These practices date back thousands of years. Over the last 50 years, Native American sweat lodge ceremonies have made their way into the dominant American culture and sweat lodge ceremonies run by both Native Americans and non-natives can now be found in pretty much every state. Here in Northern New Mexico we have a great number of people who practice and

'I do think that ceremonial steam baths have something to offer all people and if done well, a non-Native 'sweat lodge' for non-Native people can be a very important, healing and beautiful thing. Just as its absurd to 'pretend' to run a Catholic mass if you aren't catholic, it's also absurd to tell people that they cannot or should not pray in groups, sing devotional songs, or meditate together. There are basic spiritual practice elements that are universal' — Johnathan Ellerby

participate in varying forms of sweat lodge ceremonies. Ironically, it seems that the native people of the area, the Taos Pueblo, don't have the sweat lodge as part of their traditional practices.

Based on archaeological evidence corroborated by oral traditions, it seems that the most traditional form of Native American sweat house was temporary and oftentimes portable. Constructed of natural materials such as tree branch frames arched into a dome or oblong shape and covered with bark, blankets or skins. At times they were sealed with mud

or even sod. Inside, a depression near the door cradled the rocks. These were heated outside and then brought into the lodge where water was sprinkled on them to produce steam. Every part of both the construction, arrangement and ceremony was imbued with symbolism reflecting that culture's beliefs.

Today, sweat lodges in our area are generally framed with tree branches and are covered with a mix of canvas tarps, wool blankets and animal skins. Plastic tarps occasionally top some lodges.

While not all sweat lodges practiced in North America are based in traditional Native American ceremonies, this migration of the sweat lodge ceremonies into the popular culture has not come without controversy. While there are many forms of sweat lodge that are not inspired by Native American ceremonies and many interfaith ceremonies that pull from a wide range of traditions, the number of ceremonies operated in Native American traditions — but by non-native people — has understandably gotten a tremendous amount of pushback from the Native American community. The 2009 deaths of several sweat lodge participants in an \$10,000 per person ceremony in Sedona brought fresh focus on the conflict over the cultural appropriation of sweat lodge ceremonies by non-native practitioners.

Jonathan Ellerby, author of "Return to the Sacred," has written that "I personally do not think or feel that non-Native people should run Native lodges. Too many Native traditions have been borrowed and stolen from Native Peoples only to be misused, sold or poorly conducted. These are very powerful and culturally sacred practices and it's a deep act of disrespect just to 'copy' the practices of another tradition."

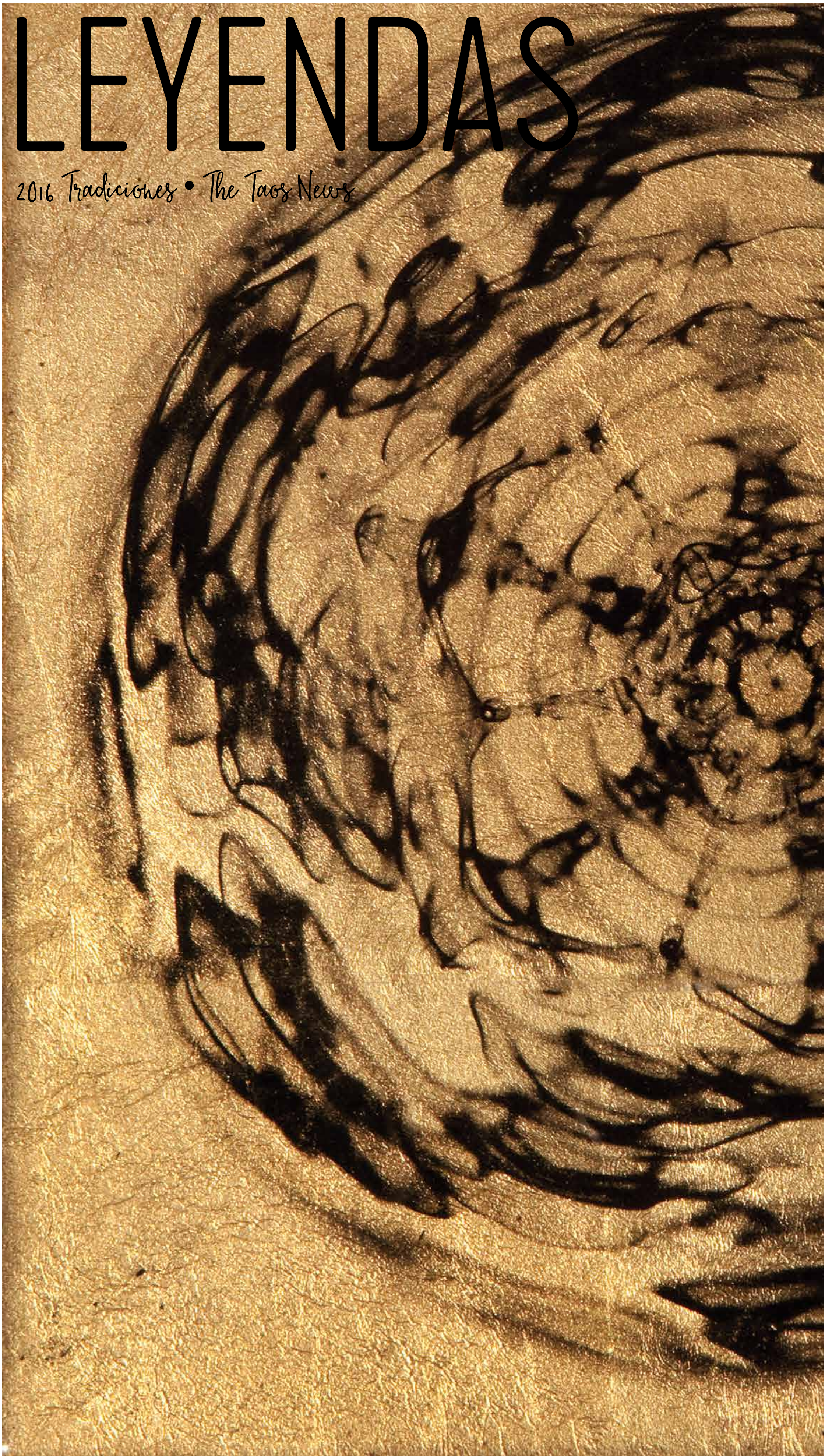
But, he writes, there are appropriate ways non-native people can practice their own sweat

lodges without being disrespectful.

"I do think that ceremonial steam baths have something to offer all people and if done well, a non-Native 'sweat lodge' for non-Native people can be a very important, healing and beautiful thing. Just as its absurd to 'pretend' to run a Catholic mass if you aren't catholic, it's also absurd to tell people that they cannot or should not pray in groups, sing devotional songs, or meditate together. There are basic spiritual practice elements that are universal," he wrote in a 2010 article.

Taos area spiritual leaders I have spoken to recommend finding a qualified sweat lodge leader if you are considering joining such a ceremony. Ask around the community first to find basic information about the various leaders and ceremonies. Once you find someone who interests you, be sure to speak with several different people who have participated in sweats with that leader in order to form a rounded and accurate picture. Once you find a potential lodge leader, explore their experience. They should be open to talking with you personally about their background, spiritual practice and their training. You really want to know what you are getting into and what to expect. It would be foolish to just stumbled your way into such a powerful ceremony. And you should never feel shamed by this person nor should you be pressured into doing something that feels uncomfortable. When asking a Native lodge leader be sure to do so with particular respect. Remember, you are crossing the line into a realm of traditions that may not be your own.

Speaking of that crossover into cultural and spiritual practices that are not your own, remember that you may need to suspend many of your own cultural beliefs when entering the ceremony. Be sure to show respect for beliefs and practices that may be vastly different from your own.



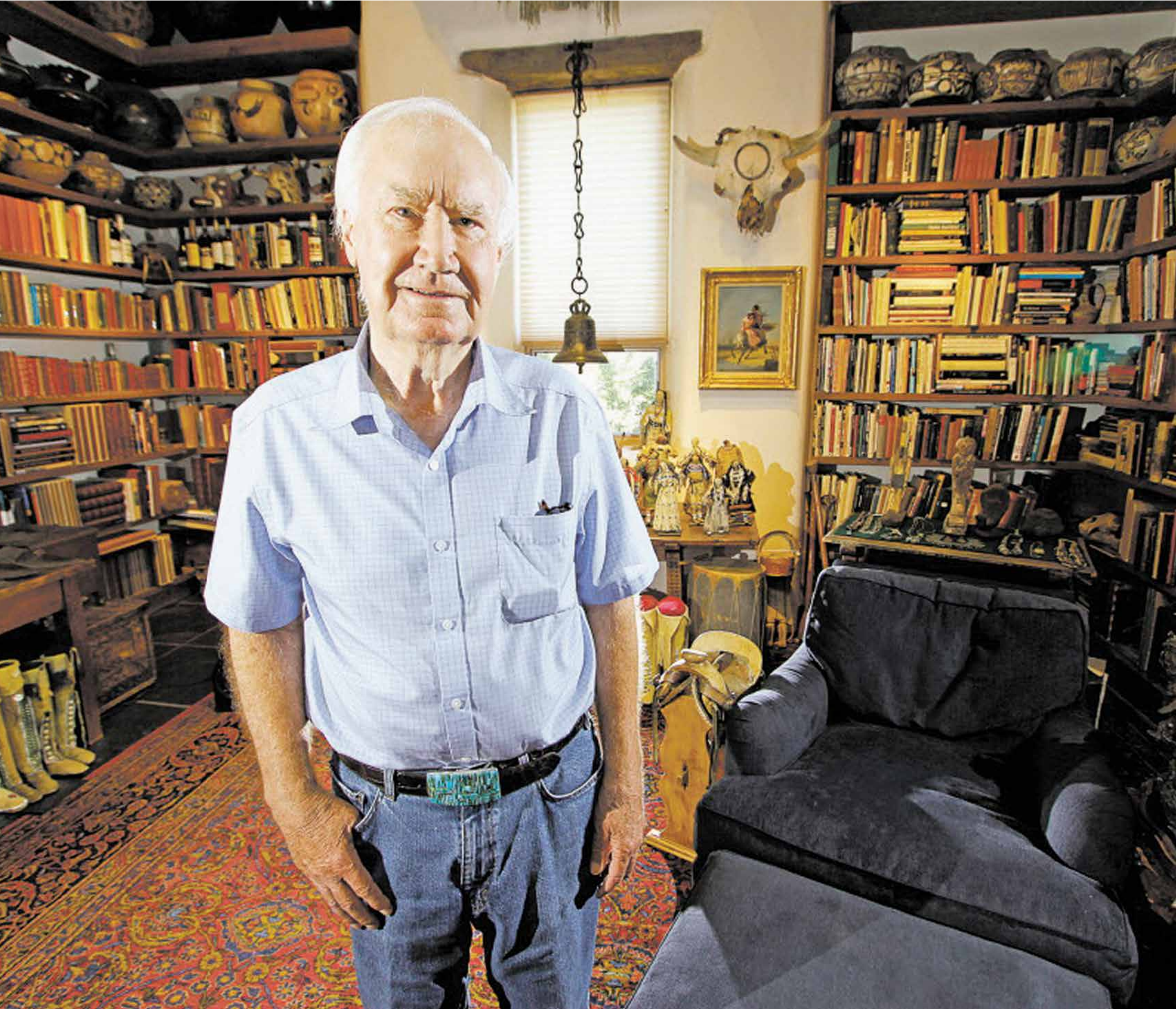
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Photograph by Louviere + Vanessa
A recording of the Taos Hum is transformed into a photograph. To see the full image, see story on page 16.



Courtesy image
The highly sought after Fenn's treasure chest.



Santa Fe New Mexican file photo
Forrest Fenn in his Santa Fe home in 2014.

HIDDEN TREASURE

Forrest Fenn's challenge

BY CINDY BROWN

Not many stories become legends after only six years. But then again, not many involve a treasure of gold and ancient artifacts worth millions of dollars.

In 2010, Santa Fe author and art dealer Forrest Fenn hid a cast bronze chest, itself worth more than \$25,000. He won't say exactly when he hid it. "I have not been willing to give the exact date because that would be a clue I am not ready to reveal," Fenn said when interviewed for *The Taos News*.

The chest contains nuggets of gold, ancient jewelry and a golden frog estimated to be close to 1,500 years old. The loaded treasure chest weighs 42 pounds. Its exact value is not known, but has been estimated to be near two million dollars.

Fenn has said that the chest is in a special place for him and has told no one where it is, including his wife of more than 57 years. He composed a poem that contains clues to the location of the treasure.

Since he hid the gold, tens of thousands of people have been looking for it. Fenn says, "I am surprised that so many people have actively searched for it; 65,000 at last estimate."

'...Fenn, as I discovered, is not the enemy they would like him to be. In his own way, and very successfully, he has worked to bridge the gap of time. In a personal fashion, he is reconnecting stories to objects, doing very much what researchers are striving for, only in a way they never could, or would.'

—Craig Childs

Although no one has found it, Fenn reports that some searchers have been within 200 feet of its hiding place, based on their reports to him.

WHO IS FORREST FENN AND WHY DID HE HIDE THE TREASURE

Fenn found an arrowhead when he was 9 years old and from that moment had an interest in artifacts and history. He did not immediately pursue his interest, however. In his early years, he was a war hero, flying more than 300 combat missions in Vietnam as a fighter pilot.

In the 1970s he moved with his family to Santa Fe to start an art business, known as Fenn Galleries. Although he had no background in art, he made a few favorable sales in the first weeks and his career as art dealer and artifact collector was launched. In a blog post on his web site Old Santa Fe Trading Co., Fenn says, "In 1975, we acquired a great painting by Nicolai Fechin for \$7,500, and sold it two weeks later for \$15,000. That was 100 percent profit in 14 days. I was loving the art business, but I still had so much to learn. I didn't know the difference between abstract art and modern art, or even if there was a difference." Although he sold the business after 17 years, Fenn maintains an extensive private collection of Native American and other artifacts.

His endeavors have not been without controversy. In the early 1980s, Fenn purchase the ruin of the San Lazaro Pueblo outside of Santa Fe and excavated it, which is legal under current U.S. law. He sold it to a good friend and is now the ranch manger.

In his book "Finders, Keepers," author Craig Childs devotes a whole chapter to Fenn. Childs says that while many archeologist think private excavation is a travesty, the

whole picture is not so clear. Childs notes: "...Fenn, as I discovered, is not the enemy they would like him to be. In his own way, and very successfully, he has worked to bridge the gap of time. In a personal fashion, he is reconnecting stories to objects, doing very much what researchers are striving for, only in a way they never could, or would."

Fenn has contributed some of his finds in order to help others. In 2013, he filled a cast bronze jar he made himself with artifacts and bones excavated from the San Lazaro site and donated it for a raffle to help a cancer patient, who is also a searcher for the chest.

Fenn has written seven previous books and two about his life and treasure — "The Thrill of the Chase," available only at Collected Works in Santa Fe and "Too Far to Walk," published in 2013.

In 1988, Fenn was diagnosed with cancer and given a 20 percent chance to live three years. He has said that originally he envisioned that he would hide the treasure and then lie down next to it die. That was 28 years ago. Today, Fenn is in his mid-80s and shows few signs of slowing down.

FENN'S TREASURE continues on page 14



FENN'S TREASURE *continues from page 13*

THE SEARCH

There are nine original clues contained in the poem and from time to time, Fenn releases some more clues on his web site, oldsantafetradingco.com. He has said that the treasure could be hidden on private or public land and has clarified that he never said that it was buried — only hidden. He delights in tantalizing searchers with clues, such as that the treasure is hidden more than 8.25 miles north of Santa Fe and 300 miles west of Peoria, Illinois.

Interest has been focused in many places. One is Yosemite where Fenn spent summers as a child. Rangers at more than one national park have expressed the opinion that the treasure hunt is a nuisance and a potential threat to the cultural and natural resources of the national parks. A Yellowstone ranger observed that the treasure hunters were often less prepared for wilderness conditions than other visitors, and indeed more than one search and rescue mission has been prompted by a lost treasure hunter.

Another center of interest has been along the Río Grande near Taos. A ranger at the Wild Rivers area near Questa says that many people have visited looking for the treasure there. Fenn says that there are several avid searchers in the Taos area and one reported an encounter with a mountain lion. As to the question of who would own the treasure, if it were found on public lands, Allison Sandoval, public affairs specialist for the Bureau of Land Management-State of New Mexico says, "Anything left on public land for more than 15 days is considered abandoned property and should be returned to the BLM."

The search has extended to the mountains and forests above Taos. "I get a lot of request from folks looking for it, wanting maps and directions to certain clues," says Carrie Leven, archaeologist with the Questa District of the Carson National Forest. "Folks are not allowed to dig pits looking for treasure on the

forest land without permission, as it can damage archaeological sites." According to Kathy DeLucas, public affairs officer with CNF, anything found in the national forest is public property.

THE CLUES

The first clue is: Begin it where warm waters halt. Theories abound on the meaning of "warm waters." As a fly-fishing term, it means any water not associated with trout. It could mean a place where warm water meets cold, such as hot springs like the Stagecoach Springs near the Río Grande, west of Taos.

One of the next clues is "Put in below the home of Brown," which has been interpreted to refer to brown trout, brown big horn sheep, the brown bats of Cody, Wyoming, and even a local family by the name of Brown.

SEARCHERS RUINED AND LOST

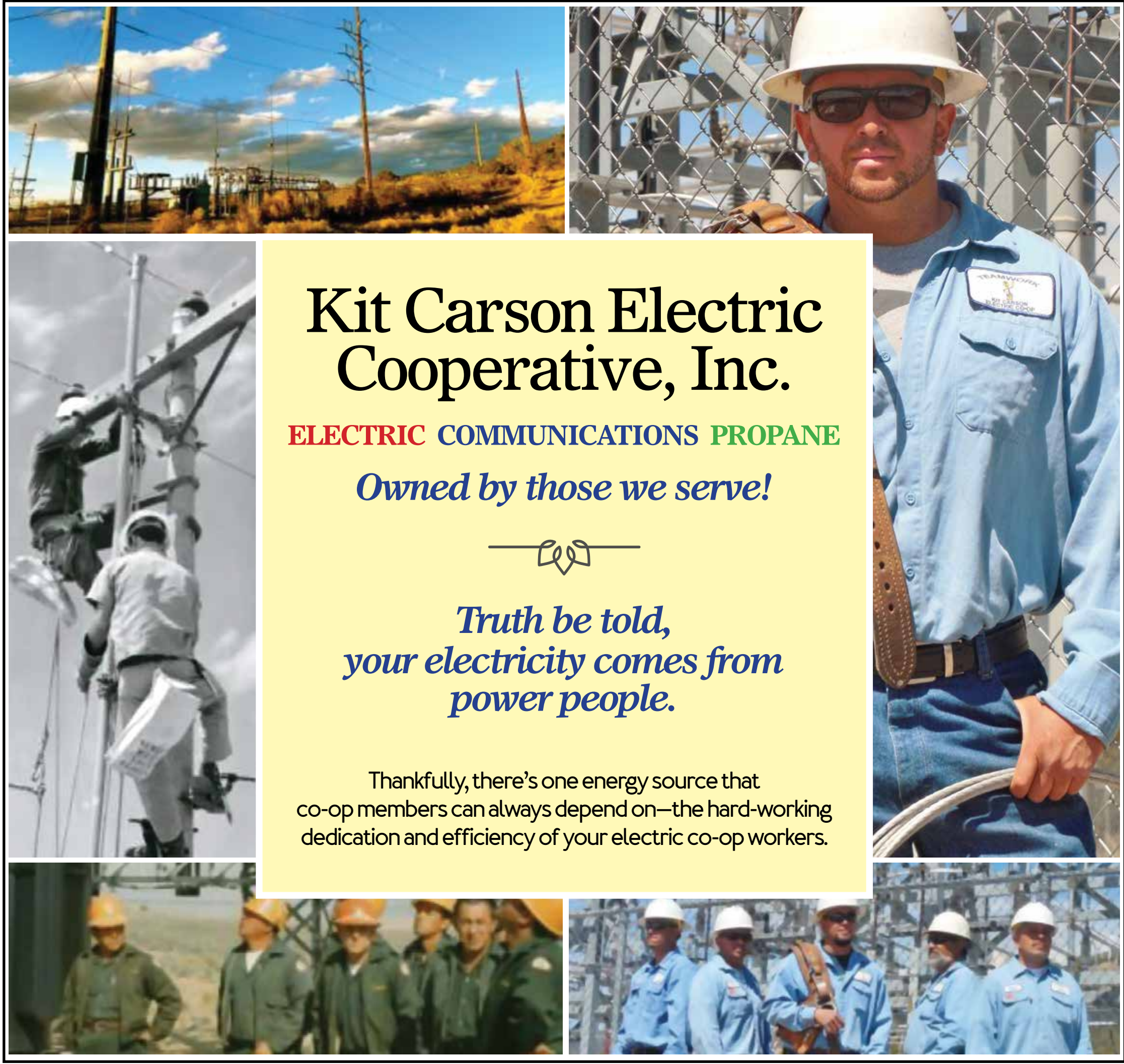
The search for the treasure has reached the level of obsession for some. People have reportedly moved to New Mexico specifically to look for the treasure.

One searcher was described as making 17 trips in 17 months to look for the treasure, driving nearly 20,000 miles in the process and having to be rescued by a search and rescue operation — more than once. This particular searcher eventually spent all his money, lost his job and is near homelessness as a result. He also lost touch with reality and was convinced that he had seen the treasure — perhaps across an impassable obstacle. Another searcher reportedly spent all her money on the search and had to declare bankruptcy.

A Colorado man was lost in January of this year. His remains were found this past summer along the Río Grande north of Cochiti Lake. Fenn was among the people that helped with the search for the man.

IN THE WORDS OF FORREST FENN

"Six years have passed since the treasure was hidden. When asked about the greatest pleasures and disappointments of the experience, he says:



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“My rewards from hiding the chest have far out-raced the disappointments. A man sent me an email and said that he had not spoken with his brother for 17 years, but when he heard about the treasure, he called his brother and suggested they go searching. Now they are very close.

“One 8-year-old girl asked, ‘Mr. Fenn, if I find the treasure do I have to share it with my brother?’ Of the 100 emails I receive each day about half of them thank me, saying that they didn’t find the treasure, but they wanted to thank me for getting them off the couch, away from the game room and the texting machines and out in the mountains. The big disappointment is a searcher went missing in the Río Grande canyon west of Santa Fe, and has not been found.”

WHY HIDE IT, WHY SEARCH FOR IT
Some speculate that there is no treasure at all and Fenn admits that there is no way to prove he actually hid it; until someone finds it.

Others suspect that if there is a treasure, the real reason that Fenn hid it was to assure his own legacy be recorded as a part of history. Indeed, his autobiography is one of the artifacts hidden in the chest — sealed with wax into an olive jar. He has said that he hopes that the treasure is discovered in 2000 years and given to the Smithsonian to display, so that everyone then can know the story.

But as to the question why so many people continue to search for the treasure, perhaps Fenn gives the most compelling explanation. In an interview with World Report magazine soon after the treasure was hidden he said, “All of us are always looking for something new, something different, something better — a better life or a better place. I love the thrill of the chase.”

For more information:
Old Santa Fe Trading Co.
oldsantafetradingco.com
[facebook.com/TheThrill-of-the-Chase-157364220954166](https://www.facebook.com/TheThrill-of-the-Chase-157364220954166)

FENN’S POEM:
And with my treasures bold,
I can keep my secret where,

And hint of riches new and old.
Begin it where warm waters halt
And take it in the canyon down,
Not far, but too far to walk.

Put in below the home of Brown.
From there it's no place for the meek,
The end is ever drawing nigh;
There'll be no paddle up your creek,

Just heavy loads and water high.
If you've been wise and found the blaze,
Look quickly down, your quest to cease,
But tarry scant with marvel gaze,

Just take the chest and go in peace.
So why is it that I must go
And leave my trove for all to seek?
The answers I already know,

I've done it tired, and now I'm weak.
So hear me all and listen good,
Your effort will be worth the cold.
If you are brave and in the wood I give
you title to the gold.

NEW CLUES:

CLUE 10
The treasure is hidden higher than 5,000 feet above sea level.

CLUE 11
No need to dig up the old outhouses, the treasure is not associated with any structure.

CLUE 12
The treasure is not in a graveyard

CLUE 13
The treasure is not hidden in Idaho or Utah

Source: From Old Santa Fe Trading Company web site, *oldsantafetradingco.com*

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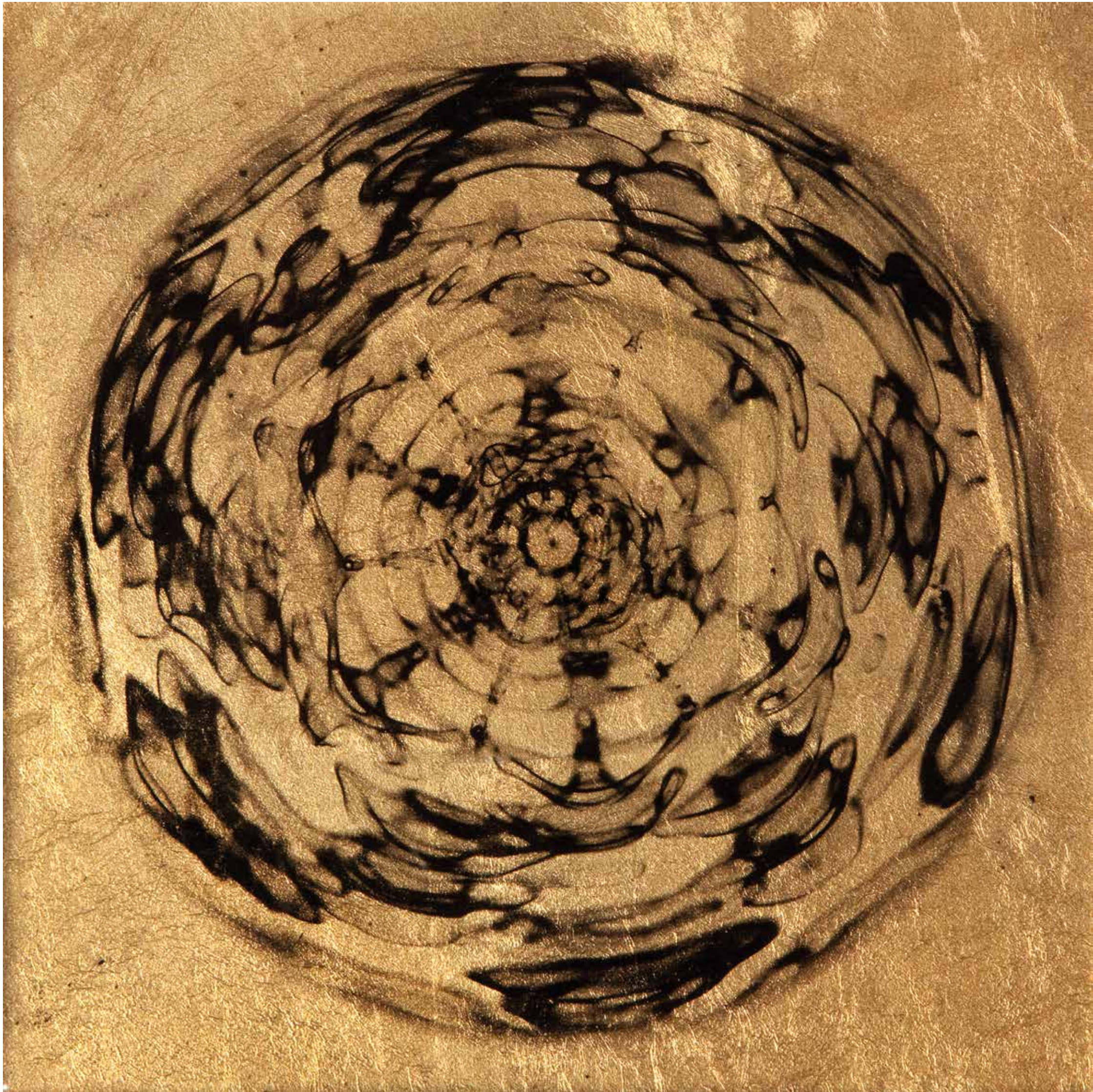
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Using recordings uploaded to YouTube, Louivere+Vanessa broadcast audio files through a digital spectrometer to create images. These were then printed, using an archival inkjet printer, onto handmade Japanese kozo paper, which was dibond primed with gesso, covered in gold leaf, and coated with resin. The resulting photographs are aural visualizations of an elusive noise: the Hum. Above is a recording from Taos.

THE TAOS HUMDINGER

Elusive sound ... still elusive

BY CODY HOOKS

Shhhhhh.
Quiet.
Can you hear that? Can you feel it?
Don't worry about it if you can't. But if you do, welcome to the club.

Rumbles and rumblings — What is that sound and who are these people?

The Taos Hum is one of those things around here that everyone's heard of, even if everyone hasn't heard it.

The people who are “hearers” describe it a lot of different ways. The norm, however, is something like a diesel engine, usually in the night, often in the winter long after alfalfa cutting is done and over. Like an idling ride, the Hum is more than a sound. The Hum is a rumble, low and slow, a vibration not so much heard in the ears as felt in sway of blood and bones.

It's not tinnitus. I get a ringing in my ears and I know people with tinnitus. We've never heard the Hum. Don't be ridiculous. Don't be dismissive either.

Assuming you're not standing under a street light with fidgety filaments, you know Taos can be deathly quiet at night. Sound slips through the blackened seas of sage, like the sinister sails of a pirate ship rolling with the rise and fall of the mesa, across the Gorge and into our minds. It is no dream.

Hum hearers come in all shapes and stripes. Some report only hearing the Hum for a brief period — say, a decade out of a lifetime in Taos. Others definitely can't take it that long and are driven clear out of town. Still others quietly suffer with the disquieting sound.

The funny thing about the Taos Hum is that is not at all unique to Taos. It's worldwide. The Wold Hum Map is the digital manifestation of a global community of hearers. While not scientifically useful, the map shows the enormity of the phenomenon. It reveals big pockets of Hum hearers in urban centers. But since there are more people and more potential for run-of-the-mill racket, perhaps that's not surprising. The Hum is most distinct and obvious, however, in middle-of-nowhere locales like Taos.

Taos became an epicenter of Hum hearers in the front half of the 1990s. As the boosters like to say, just the name “Taos” gives it that certain (i.e., marketable) cachet. Outsiders love our weirdness — tell me I'm wrong, I dare you. They savor it. Just salivate over it. In those early days, the Taos Hum was so popular, in fact, that people wrote into your community paper, *The Taos News*, from all over the world complaining of the noise, seeking solidarity, seeking answers and even offering up their own explanations for what the Taos Hum really was.

ON VIBRATIONS
A fellow from Cheshire, England, began to hear the hum around 1981. After 12 years, he wrote to *The Taos News* and posited the elusive sound must be the byproduct of industrial compressors.

Sound pollution from industry is not an uncommon explanation.

A guy from Southern California suggested that the sound is “not localized to the ears but seems to be coming from somewhere else.” He figured Taoseños — living in the highly active spiritual plane they do — were simply tuned into the “nada,” part of the yogic tradition that says sound vibrations, rather than matter, is the source of existence.

Geology buffs are sure to chose between one of two rock-themed explanations: wind in the Río Grande Gorge, or, the caves in and around El Salto waterfalls acting as resonance chambers, which project the harmonics of that hallowed, hollow and otherwise otherworldly space.

And let's be honest: what's the fun in theorizing if you're not willing to throw a little oomph and imagination in for good measure? Some of the best theories for the Taos Hum are the hardest to validate. There's underground drilling (from Los Alamos to somewhere politically important) and crystals and/or towers at Taos' antipode, which happens to be some 4,500 miles southeast of the coast of Madagascar.

Of course, it's also possible Taos simply didn't know the words.

ELF
Stay with me now — this is where it gets good.

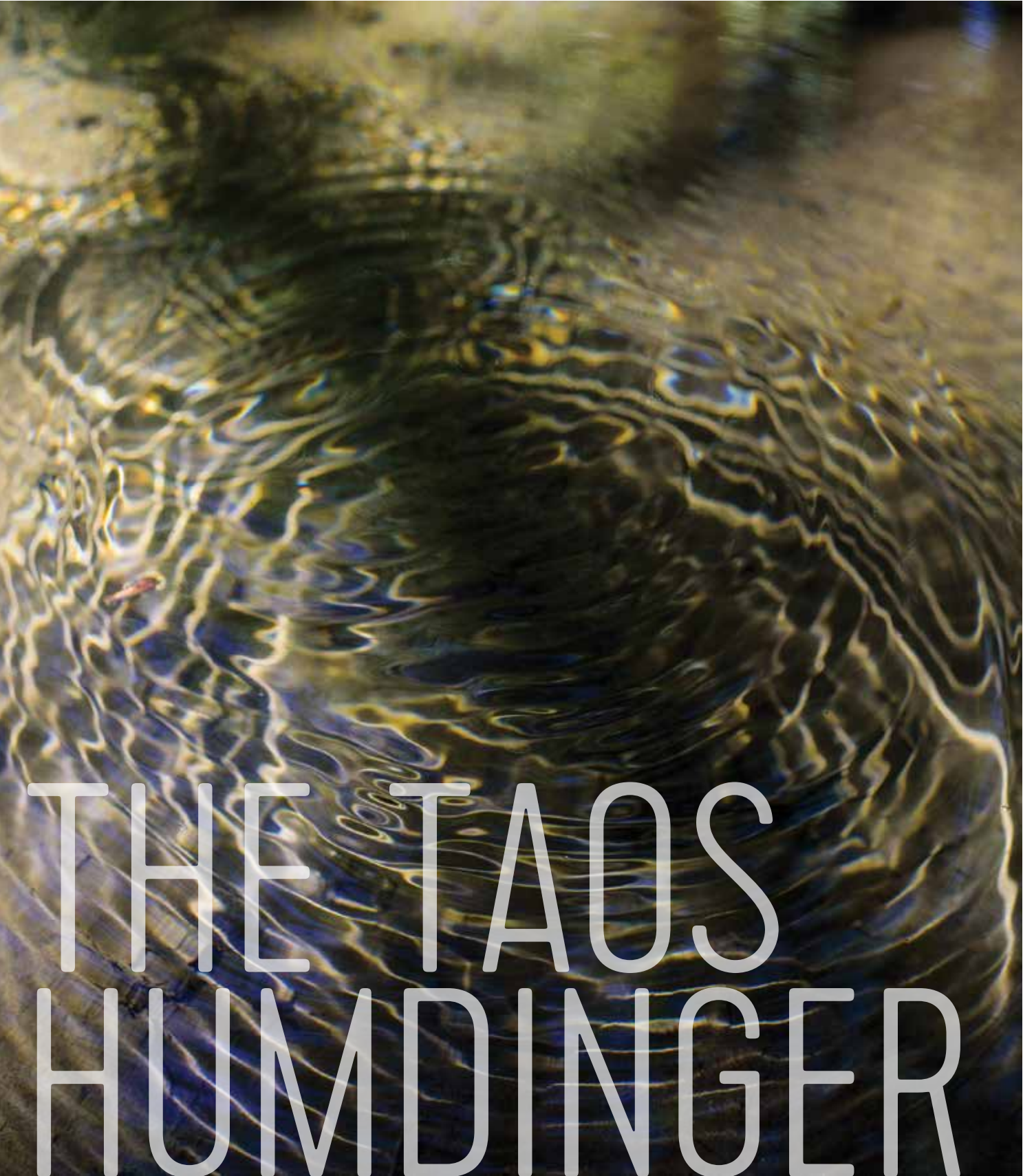
The most popular explanation for the Hum, by far, is extremely low frequencies (ELF).

Scientifically inclined people will enjoy knowing those are somewhere in the ballpark of 3 to 30 Hertz. The rest of us can get by with a story about the Soviet Union and submarines.

ELF waves are naturally occurring. They are the result of lightening, like thunder in the belly of monsoon season. But they have also been used in a couple of instances so government bigwigs can communicate with their submarines. The idea really took off during the Cold War, when the government was hot on the trail of a technology that could withstand an atomic attack. But it's a costly form of communication. Huge antennas and amounts of energy are required to send incredibly simple messages; just three characters take 15 minutes to broadcast. Slow as they are, the signals are effective, winding around mountains and across landscapes, slipping off coasts and into oceans.

To be sure, there are a few ELF transmitters dotted around the world. Scouts liked our neck of the woods and put New Mexico in the running for an ELF-equipped military instillation, along with Nevada and Wisconsin, the latter of which ultimately won out.

The original idea for Wisconsin, known as Project Sanguine, called for a grid of antennas spread over 20,000 square miles. You can imagine how that went down. The project was scaled down multiple times, once calling for antennas in tunnels far, far underground so bedrock would passively amplify the signal. Finally, it manifested as Project ELF. Intersecting transmission antennas, each 14 to 28 miles long, were nestled within the boundaries of



Hum hearers come in all shapes and stripes. Some report only hearing the Hum for a brief period — say, a decade out of a lifetime in Taos. Others definitely can't take it that long and are driven clear out of town. Still others quietly suffer with the disquieting sound.

national forests in Wisconsin and Michigan.

The U.S. military also employed a related technology in its ariel TACAMO system, called very low frequencies, which outlived the terrestrial version of the technology.

THE TAOS FILES

While Project ELF was still up and running, the theory did amass some scientific inquiry. But like the cattle mutilations that also plagued Taos the 1990s, what attention the Hum did attract was meager.

In May 1993, a team of University of New Mexico scientists and national lab researchers came to Taos to seek out the source of the Hum at the request of the congressional delegation. They set up shop with sensitive equipment across the Taos area — south of Ranchos de Taos, near the golf course and in three spots around Tres Piedras. Specifically, they were hunting for ELF activity, radar and other Department of Defense static in the form of specific acoustic, electromagnetic and seismic signals. The team came up empty-handed.

But get this. They did note an unusually high presence of 60-Hz signals and their harmonics (120 and 180 Hz) both aligned with and running far afield from the greater Taos electrical grid. The observation didn't point to a cause, but it was enough to pique their interest and suggest some next steps of scientific inquiry. Unfortunately, none ever really came.

The team also cautioned Taosños about the ever growing volume of electric gadgets and cordless devices — if only they'd known then what our cordless telephones would look like a couple decades later (the national lab scientists probably did). Nowadays, there's all manner of technological noise, what with grandmas on Facebook and all these kids playing on their phones.

The attention given to the phantom, acoustic phenomenon only pried open people's curiosity and imagination even more. Meanwhile, people are still hearing the Hum — theories as plentiful and answers as elusive as ever.



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Tree of Life image courtesy of Nina Anthony

GOLD HILL

Whispers of the past

BY CINDY BROWN

High above Taos, the mountains hold reminders of the past. Those hiking to Gold Hill may be lucky enough to see not only wildflowers and wildlife, but also remnants of the mining past, where fortunes were sometimes made, but more often lost. Near the summit of Gold Hill there are the mining pits and fallen walls that housed mining operations, which began perhaps as early as the 1860s.

SHOSHONE COPPER PROSPECT

According to Carrie Leven, archaeologist for Questa District of the Carson National Forest, there are three patented mining claims that show up on maps as 20-acre rectangles in this area. She says, “Nearer to the top of Gold Hill are mining company remains from Shoshone Copper Mine owned by the Gusdorf brothers. The fallen down lumber buildings are part of a Denver Whim (machinery for hoisting ore) which used horse or mule power. The rock and gravel piles can also still be seen. Apparently they packed the ore out in barrels using mules or donkeys.”

In Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of New Mexico, it is recounted that the nearby town of Amizette experienced a brief population boom due to mining at

Gold Hill. Authors James and Barbara Sherman say, “In the year 1897, a population of 200 was reported, as well as the 10 producing mines with an estimated daily output of 600 tons of gold, silver, copper and lead ore, plenty of good wood and water and a miner’s wage of \$4 a day.” The authors say, “The gold was there – it was found and extracted.” However, the cost of transporting the ore from the mountain was so expensive it caused many prospectors to go broke.

At the very top of Gold Hill (12,711 feet), another mining pit is visible near the rock shelter that today protects hikers from the strong wind that often blows up there.

The name Gold Hill is thought to reflect the gold mining past, although others argue it is because there are such stunning views of leaves turning in the forest below in the fall, or perhaps it is the shining golden color of the abundant grasses as autumn approaches.

Leven says “There is an old-timer’s story that two slabs of rock, coated with gold, were found at the summit.” This report came from George Oldham in the book by his niece published in 1947, called “Wagon Days in Red River.”

LOOKOUT CABIN

Just down the other side of the summit to the north are traces of a different kind of history. There is an old ranger cottage from the early 1900s with its walls still standing. This cabin was part of a series of high lookouts constructed by the forest service to watch for fires.

Archaeologist Leven says, “Gold Hill served as a fire lookout. In 1920, the Forest Service hung a telephone line (in the trees) that ran down Deer Creek and then Columbine Canyon to the Moly Mine office. Another line ran to the post office in Red River. There is a rock pile on top of Gold Hill that supported the telephone pole. If a ranger on patrol saw smoke, he would ride his horse to the telephone and call it in.”

Leven has researched the cabin and found numerous excerpts about it from a publication called “Carson Pine Cone;”

FROM MARCH 1912

“The fire plan for 1912 is based on a system of control lookouts. These are as follows:
-San Antone Mountain
-Canjilon Mountain
-Gold Hill

-Bull of the Woods peak

Guards will be stationed at these lookouts constantly during fire season. (Telephone) lines will be built to the summits of Gold Hill and Bull of the Woods Mountain during the coming summer.”

FROM AUGUST 1919

“Ranger Cottam is preparing to have a new cabin constructed for the Gold Hill lookout man. The cabin will have a rock foundation ... it is thought with the foundation it will be possible to keep the cabin dry.”

Leven reminds us that nothing should be removed or disturbed in archaeological sites on public lands. She says, “These are considered artifacts and features that contribute to telling the story of the archaeological site ... the sites are fragile and easily damaged and destroyed.”

Indeed, the fragile ruins remind us of the impermanence and passing nature of all that we build and think will last forever. The ghosts of the miners’ dreams and perhaps those of the early rangers as well, linger — causing us to pause and remember the lives and hopes of those who lived in Taos long before we came.



Old Gold Hill lookout cabin, circa 1919.

Courtesy Carson National Forest

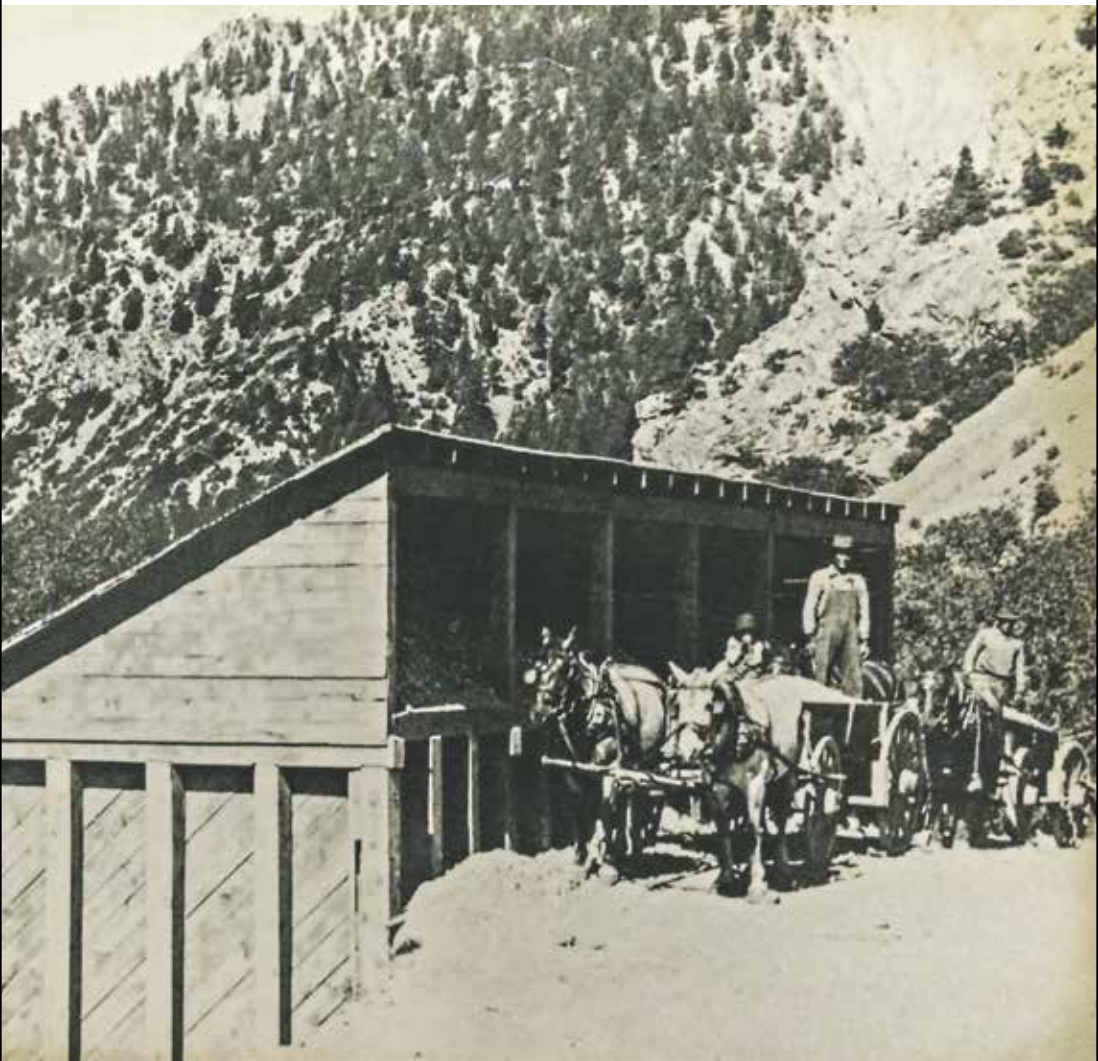


In ghost towns and mining camps of New Mexico, it is recounted that the nearby town of Amizette experienced a brief population boom due to mining at Gold Hill.

Cindy Brown

Clockwise from top right: The Gold Hill lookout cabin as it stands today; Mining equipment remains on Gold Hill from the Shoshone copper prospecting days; The Gold Hill lookout cabin as it stands today; Piles of battered wood are all that remain from the Denver Whim's buildings used for housing workers.

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– S. Berry



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- *Ancient Indian Proverb*



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